CLAIMS

1.   A method of viewing visual media across a network comprising the steps of:

i)   storing respective local visual media data corresponding to the same visual media on first and second network elements connected to the network;

ii)   creating derived visual media data from the locally stored visual media data with a processing means of the first network element;

iii)   automatically generating a control data set representing the derived visual data and corresponding to operations to be performed by a processing means to create the derived visual media data;

iv)   transmitting the control data set from the first network element to the second network element via the network;

v)   recreating the derived visual data with a processing means of the second network element by use of the control data set; and

vi)   displaying the local visual media data in accordance with the derived visual media data upon viewing means of the second network element.

2.   A method according to claim 1 in which the step of creating derived visual media is performed automatically.

3.   A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein creating derived visual data comprises selecting a portion of the locally stored visual media data corresponding to a portion of the visual media.

4.   The method of claim 3 comprising displaying the portion of the locally stored visual media upon viewing means of the first network element substantially synchronously with step (vi).

5.   A method according to claim 1 in which the visual media data stored on first and second elements are identical.

6.　　The method of claim 1 comprising using visual saliency techniques to select the portion of the visual media automatically.

5　7.　　The method of claim 1 comprising including in the automatically generated control data set a spatial and temporal locational information detailing a sub-set of video visual media.

8.　　The method of claim 1 comprising sharing a rostrum path between
10　the first and second network elements.

9.　　The method of claim 1 comprising transferring visual media data from the first network element to the second network element prior to step (i).

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10.　　The method of claim 1 further comprising:

i)　　creating further derived visual media data from the locally stored visual media data with a processing means of the second network element;

ii)　　automatically generating a control data set representing the further
20　derived visual data and corresponding to operations to be performed by a processing means to create the derived visual media data;

iii)　　transmitting the control data set from the second network element to the first network element via the network; and

v)　　recreating the further derived visual data with a processing means of
25　the first network element by use of the control data set.

11. A visual media viewing system comprising first and second network elements connected over a network;

the first network element including data storage means for storing visual
30　media data, selection means for automatically selecting a portion of the visual media data, processing means for processing said portion of the visual media data, data generation means for generating a control data set

and transmission means for transmitting the control data set to the second network element over the network;

the second network element including receiving means for receiving the control data set from the first network element, data storage means for locally storing a copy of the visual media data, processing means for processing the received and the visual media data and display means for displaying an image corresponding to the processed visual media data; wherein the control data set includes information relating to the location of said portion within the locally stored copy of the visual media data and processing instructions relating to the generation and display of the image generated from said portion upon the display means.

12. A visual media viewing system according to claim 11 wherein the control data set is smaller than the portion of the visual media data.

13. A visual media viewing system according to claim 11 wherein the first network element has display means for displaying the
image generated from the portion of the visual media data synchronously with its display upon the display means of the second network element.

14. A visual media viewing system according to claim 11 wherein there is provided a third network element connected to the network, including viewing means and data storage means arranged to store said visual media locally, and the first network element is arranged to transmit the control data set to the third network element such that said viewing means is arranged to display the portion of the visual media that is stored locally, substantially synchronously with the display of the portion of the visual media upon the second network element.

15. A network element comprising data storage means for storing visual media data, selection means for automatically selecting derived visual media data from the stored visual media data, processing means for

processing said derived visual media data, data generation means for generating a control data set and transmission means for transmitting the control data set across a network to a remote network element having a local copy of the visual media data stored thereupon, wherein the control

5   data set includes information corresponding to operations to be performed by a processing means to create the derived visual media data to enable a processor receiving the control data set to recreate the derived visual data for display of the local visual media data in accordance with the derived visual media data.

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16. A network element as claimed in claim 15, wherein the information contained in the control data set comprises information relating to the location of said portion within the visual media data and processing instructions relating to the generation and display of an image

15   corresponding to said portion of the visual media data from the local copy of the visual media stored upon the remote network element.

17. A network element according to claim 15 wherein the network element comprises a viewing means for viewing the automatically selected portion

20   of the visual media data synchronously with the display of the image upon the remote network element.

18. A network element according to claim 15 wherein the selection means is arranged to automatically select a portion of the visual media data in

25   response to a user selection of a region of an image formed from the visual media data.

19. A network element according to claim 15 wherein the selection means is arranged to select, automatically, a portion of the visual media using a

30   visual saliency technique.

20. A network element according to claim 15 wherein the control data set includes details of transitions between a plurality of automatically selected portions of visual media.

5   21. A network element according to claim 15 wherein the
selection means selects the portion of the data in response to a prompt from a remote network element.

22. A network element comprising receiving means for receiving a control
10   data set from a remote network element across a network, data storage means for locally storing visual media data, processing means for
processing the received control data set and the visual media data and display means for displaying an image corresponding to the processed visual media data, wherein the received control data set includes
15   information relating to the location of an automatically selected portion of the visual media data and processing instructions relating to the generation and display of an image of said portion from the locally stored visual media data upon the display means.

20   23. A network element according to claim 22 wherein the control data set includes processing instructions relating to the display of the image upon the network element synchronously with the display of the image upon the remote network element.

25   24. A program storage device readable by a machine encoding a program of instructions which when operated upon the machine cause the machine to operate as a network element according to claim 15.

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25. A personal computer comprising a data storage device for storing visual media data, an image processor for automatically selecting a portion of the visual media data, a central processor for generating a control data set including the location of said portion within the visual media data and information relating to the processing of the data by the image processor, a network interface card for transmitting the control data set, over a network, to a second personal computer having a locally stored copy of the visual media data thereupon and a screen for displaying an image corresponding to the portion of the data synchronously with the second personal computer.

26. A personal computer comprising a network interface card for receiving a control data set from a remote personal computer across a network, a data storage device for locally storing visual media data, a processor for processing the received control data set and the visual media data and a screen for displaying an image corresponding to the processed visual media data, wherein the received control data set includes information relating to location of an automatically selected portion of the visual media data and processing instructions relating to the generation and display of an image of said portion from the locally stored visual media data upon the screen synchronously with its display upon the remote personal computer.